



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/977,050	10/12/2001	David Ellis	S85.12-0001	1800
27367	7590	06/04/2007	EXAMINER	
WESTMAN CHAMPLIN & KELLY, P.A. SUITE 1400 900 SECOND AVENUE SOUTH MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-3319			TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE	
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
		3623		
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
06/04/2007		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/977,050	ELLIS ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	C. Michelle Tarae	3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 March 2007.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a Final Office Action in response to the communication received on March 19, 2007.

Claims 1, 9, 14-15, 17 and18 have been amended. Claims 1-18 are now pending in this application.

Response to Amendment

2. Applicant's amendments to claims 1, 9, 14-15, 17 and18 are acknowledged.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments have been fully considered, but are not found persuasive.

In the Remarks, Applicant argues the following:

- 1) that Shannon does not disclose analyzing project data to identify a plurality of activites;
- 2) that Shannon does not suggest risk indicators are assigned to activities that identify the consequences of a risk on the activity;
- 3) that Shannon does not give any indication that action identifiers may be added and/or modified on the basis of one or more mitigating tasks.

In response to argument 1), Examiner respectfully disagrees. In support of Applicant's argument, Applicant asserts that Shannon does not disclose any analysis of the "benefit-trade" matrix. However, Examiner respectfully submits that she did not

Art Unit: 3623

intend to mean that the “benefit-trade” matrix was analyzed, rather than the “benefit-trade” matrix was the result of the analysis. See col. 3, lines 46-48 and 63-67, where Shannon discloses first analyzing and identifying tasks or substeps associated with a process. Col. 4, lines 35-43 discloses then linking the tasks/substeps to a “benefit-trade” matrix that links to additional data related to the tasks/substeps. Thus, Examiner respectfully submits that Shannon does disclose analyzing project data to identify a plurality of activities.

In response to argument 2), Examiner respectfully disagrees. In col. 4, lines 56-61, Shannon discloses schedule, cost and risk elements associated with each of the tasks/substeps identified and linked to in the “benefit-trade” matrix. Item 32 in Figure 3 discloses obtaining weights associated with risk elements for each task/substep identified in the “benefit-trade” matrix. Thus, the higher the weight of a risk element associated with a task/substep, the greater the indication of risk for that task/substep. Therefore, Examiner respectfully submits Shannon does disclose risk indicators are assigned to activities that identify the consequences of a risk on the activity.

In response to argument 3), Examiner respectfully disagrees. In col. 6, lines 28-32 and 39-43, Shannon discloses that the simulation tool allows for scenario changes where users can modify tasks/substeps contained in the “benefit-trade” matrix and resimulate the project to see the outcome based on the changes and to understand the risks associated with the changes. In col. 6, lines 48-58, Shannon provides an example

Art Unit: 3623

of a mitigating task (i.e., virtual prototyping) identified to reduce risk for the project.

Finally, in col. 7, lines 5-32, Shannon discloses an example in which two metrics with risk indicators (bus protocol error and bus contention error) associated with the virtual prototyping task are assessed to determine whether or not to perform the prototyping task and to what degree/level to perform the task in such a way as to mitigate the overall risk for the project. Therefore, Examiner respectfully submits Shannon does disclose that action identifiers may be added and/or modified on the basis of one or more mitigating tasks.

Accordingly, Applicant's arguments have been fully considered, but are not found persuasive. The rejection is maintained and repeated below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. Claims 1-5, 8-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a,e) as being anticipated by Shannon (U.S. 6,088,678).

As per claim 1, Shannon discloses risk management software embodied upon a computer-readable medium, the software comprising a set of instructions for the following steps to be performed when the software is executed:

a) accessing project data comprising of a plurality of action identifiers, each of which identifies a separate action to be performed (col. 2, lines 11-20; col. 3,

lines 46-52; Table 1 in col. 5-6; Each action, or substep or task, to be performed as part of a project is identified and linked to a matrix.);

b) analyzing the project data to identify a plurality of activities linked to at least one of the actions, wherein to at least some of the plurality of activities is assigned at least one risk indicator, the at least one risk indicator identifying consequences of a risk on the activity (col. 3, line 60-col. 4, line 2; col. 4, lines 35-38 and 56-61; col. 6, lines 27-33 and 59-65; col. 7, lines ; Activity data

associated with each action/substep/task of the project is identified and also placed in the matrix and assigned a risk indicator.);

c) on the basis of one or more mitigating tasks identified to reduce or prevent the risk or the consequences of the risk, outputting to the project data one or more new action identifiers or alterations to existing action identifiers in the project data (col. 6, lines 27-65; col. 7, lines 5-32; The user can make changes to the project tasks to see the affects of the changes of the tasks on the overall project including seeing an increase and decrease of risk. Shannon discloses an example in which two metrics with risk indicators (bus protocol error and bus contention error) associated with the virtual prototyping task are assessed to determine whether or not to perform the prototyping task and to what degree/level to perform the task in such a way as to mitigate the overall risk for the project.); and

d) accessing changes to the project data and revising the plurality of activities in dependence on whether the changes are to action identifiers in the project data resulting from step c) above (col. 6, line 27-col. 7, line 2; The user can make changes to the project tasks to see the affects of the changes of the tasks on the overall project including seeing an increase and decrease of risk.).

As per claim 2, Shannon discloses risk management software as claimed in claim 1, wherein the changes to the project data are compared with new action identifiers or alterations to existing action identifiers previously output to the project data and where the changes to project data relate to action identifiers previously output to

Art Unit: 3623

the project data no revisions are made to the plurality of activities (col. 6, line 27-col. 7, line 2; The user can make changes to the project tasks to see the affects of the changes of the tasks on the overall project including seeing an increase and decrease of risk. The user can also halt the project and modify project tasks to see the affects on the remainder of the tasks for the project, thereby not making any project revisions to the project before the halt.).

As per claim 3, Shannon discloses risk management software as claimed in claim 1, comprising the step of receiving a trigger from the project data when the project data has been changed (col. 4, lines 5-18; The simulation tool stops at an event that it has identified as not able to be completed and remains stopped until it detects a change to the project that will allow the event to occur.).

As per claim 4, Shannon discloses risk management software as claimed in claim 1, comprising the step of periodically polling the project data to determine whether changes have been made to the project data (col. 4, lines 5-18; When the simulation tool runs, it polls the project data and makes determinations on whether changes have been made to the project data.).

As per claim 5, Shannon does not expressly disclose risk management software as claimed in claim 1, comprising the further step of automatically outputting a message to one or more predetermined recipients (col. 6, lines 22-32; An audit trail is generated at the end of each simulation to report the outcome and risk assessment of each variable of each substep of the project, where the outcome includes risk, cost and

Art Unit: 3623

schedule data. Thus, the audit trail report may be construed as a message to the user of the simulation tool.).

As per claim 8, Shannon discloses risk management software as claimed in claim 1, wherein the risk indicator comprises one or more of a cost allowance and a time allowance (col. 5, lines 28-31; col. 6, lines 27-29 and 59-62).

Claims 9-18 recite substantially similar subject matter to claims 1-5 and 8 above. Therefore, claims 9-18 are rejected on the same basis as claims 1-5 and 8 above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claim 6-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shannon (U.S. 6,088,678).

As per claim 6, Shannon discloses risk management software as claimed in claim 5, comprising the further step of automatically outputting a message to one or more predetermined recipients when the consequences of a risk are identified as discussed above in claim 5 (col. 6, lines 22-32). However, Shannon does not expressly disclose outputting the message when the consequences of a risk exceed a selected threshold. However, it is old and well known in risk management to set risk thresholds

in order to quantifiably assess the levels/impact of risk on an event, thereby enabling a manager to take action as soon as a risk has reached a certain level or impact on an event. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Shannon to have its audit reports be generated when the consequences of a risk have exceeded a selected threshold as doing so would provide managers with immediate information as to the status of risk on a project, thereby enabling the managers to take action so as to mitigate the risk in a timely fashion.

As per claim 7, Shannon discloses risk management software as claimed in claim 5, wherein the message is automatically output when the processor receives notice of an impacted risk (col. 6, lines 22-32; An audit trail is generated at the end of each simulation to report the outcome and risk assessment of each variable of each substep of the project, where the outcome includes risk, cost and schedule data. Thus, the audit trail report may be construed as a message to the user of the simulation tool notifying the user of an impacted risk.).

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to C. Michelle Tarae whose telephone number is 571-272-6727. The examiner can normally be reached Monday – Friday from 8:30am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz, can be reached at 571-272-6729.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



C. MICHELLE TAREE
PRIMARY EXAMINER

May14, 2007